

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1093

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to support and endorse the inclusion of the Johnson City Country Club on the National Register of Historic Places.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those notable sites of significant historical interest within the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the historic Johnson City Country Club will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2013 and is rightfully making preparations to submit an application to the Tennessee Historical Commission in hopes of being included on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, for nearly one hundred years, the Johnson City Country Club has served as a driving force in the development of the social, recreational, and cultural life of the Johnson City community, hosting thousands of regular meetings of such local civic organizations as the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs, and the Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson City Country Club has also been the site of a multitude of community-building events, from USO and Red Cross fundraising programs during World War II to charity dinners to support various East Tennessee State University academic endeavors and athletic programs; and

WHEREAS, established as a state-recognized entity in September of 1913, the Johnson City Country Club's five original charter members were Mr. George T. Wofford, vice-president of Tennessee National Bank; Mr. H. L. "Bud" White, owner of White Lumber Company and the Hugh L. White Agency; Mr. Lee F. Miller, founder of Empire Chair Company; Mr. Adam B. Crouch, president of Unaka National Bank; and Mr. Allen Harris, president of Harris Manufacturing; and

WHEREAS, realizing that building a club and a golf course would require a substantial capital investment, the founders chartered the original organization as the Watauga Corporation with the sole purpose of selling common shares to raise money to build the facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson City Country Club opened in 1914 with a nine-hole golf course and a small cabin located at the corner of Holston Avenue and New Street; the oldest known photographs of a club function come from a 1914 Halloween party, complete with costumes and beverages; and

WHEREAS, the early golf course was built on sixty acres leased from Harry D. Gump, a major supporter of the club, and green fees were set at twenty-five cents with club initiation fees set at twenty-five dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga Corporation had amassed enough funds by 1920 to undertake the club's plan to purchase new land, design and build a new golf course, and construct a clubhouse; and

WHEREAS, America's preeminent golf course architect of the era, A. W. Tillinghast, was hired to design an eighteen-hole course for the Johnson City Country Club; famous for bringing classic golf course architectural design from Scotland to the United States, Tillinghast's legendary golf courses include Bethpage Black, Baltusrol, Oak Hills, Pine Valley, and Winged Foot; and

WHEREAS, only the first nine holes were built due to financial constraints, and the golf course was eventually completed over the next two decades; today, the Tillinghast golf course at the Johnson City Country Club is the only remaining "Tillie" course in Tennessee and one of only three in the South; and

WHEREAS, in seeking a new clubhouse with a dignified, yet welcoming, design, the members engaged the services of the esteemed Donald R. Beeson, an architect of regional significance and the founder of one of the oldest architectural firms in Johnson City, who was heralded for his timeless designs on such projects as East Tennessee State University, King College, and Lees-McRae College; and

WHEREAS, although renovated and expanded over the years, the distinguished clubhouse building, which was completed in 1920, remains largely intact today and is a special

point of pride for members who enjoy the display of an original architectural drawing enhanced with water color in the Clubhouse's main entryway; and

WHEREAS, the prestigious Johnson City Country Club has hosted a legion of illustrious golfers over the years, including the legendary Arnold Palmer, who hit a hole-in-one during an exhibition match in 1965, and the greatest female athlete of her time, Babe Didrikson Zaharias; and

WHEREAS, Johnson City Country Club constructed its first swimming pool in the late 1930s, and now boasts expansive swimming facilities, including the first diving pool in the Tri-Cities area; and

WHEREAS, two outdoor clay tennis courts were also built at the Club in the 1930s, which were later joined by fully-lit hard surface outdoor courts and indoor tennis courts; the club became home to numerous champion tennis players who excelled at the adult and youth levels locally, statewide, and nationally; and

WHEREAS, supporting local amateur athletics at both the high school and college level, Johnson City Country Club has played a key role in the establishment of the highly successful golf team at East Tennessee State University and the state-champion Science Hill High School tennis teams; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson City Country Club has stood as one of the most distinguished, historic, and prestigious facilities in Johnson City for nearly a century, and is a fine and unsurpassable host for innumerable social gatherings, athletic competitions, and community events, and it is fitting that it be recognized with placement on the National Register of Historic Places; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby endorse and support the inclusion of the Johnson City Country Club on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.